

NSC BRIEFING

12 February 1958

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TUNISIA

(long form)

- I. French bombing of Tunisian border village has had these violent reactions in Tunis.
- A. Virtual besieging by Tunisians of all French troops *in the flat* (25,000). Provisioning of forces likely to be difficult, but unlikely Tunis will attempt to starve them out.
- B. Tunisian ambassador to Paris recalled; France requested to close half of its 10 consulates in Tunisia.
- C. Although Bourguiba's public demand for French troop withdrawal not yet followed up by formal demarche to Paris, this action likely at any time.
1. Bourguiba now will demand evacuation of Bizerte base, which he publicly offered to Paris in December.
- D. After some hesitation, Tunis will ask for UN Security Council action. Tactics may be determined at Asian-African bloc meeting called for Friday.
- 25X1X6 25X1X6
- II. [REDACTED] privately admitted to [REDACTED] that bombing was done without authority of Paris.
- III. Arab states gave wide propaganda play to bombing.
- A. Egypt wary after quick initial offer of "all assistance." May attempt to exact greatest possible political concessions from Bourguiba as price for assistance.
- B. Algerian rebel spokesman in New York (Mohamed Yazid) gave heavy play of French use of American-built equipment in attack. Call for closure of American bases throughout North Africa will find ready echo among Nationalist extremists in Morocco and to

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- IV. Moscow will apparently exploit bombing to promote disunity in NATO, to influence Tunisian policy, and promote USSR as champion of Afro-Asian nationalism.
 - A. Moscow moved promptly to convert incident into anti-American campaign.
 - B. Soviet UN delegate Sobolev (he is Security Council president this month) will probably press hard for a strong resolution condemning attack.
- V. Probable Security Council discussion internationalizes Algerian rebellion which France--with Western assistance--has assiduously attempted to avoid.
 - A. UN delegates giving thought to possible UN observer patrol on border--Bourguiba wants UN police force to patrol border.
 - 1. France believed willing to accept "no-mans land" at border, but will balk at international patrol.
 - B. Bourguiba almost certain to reassess his strongly pro-Western policy.
 - 1. Proponents of active neutralism likely to exert more influence.
 - 2. Pro-Egyptian and pro-Soviet influence likely to increase.
 - 3. If large-scale Western assistance not immediately forthcoming, Bourguiba may seek bloc aid as way out of his desperate economic plight (one-third total labor force unemployed).
- VI. French predicament will boost Algerian rebel morale and increases likelihood of large-scale spring offensive.

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